

Historic Preservation Commission Agenda

MOLLY LM SMITH

Chair

DON SIMMONS Ph.D., Vice Chair

Commission Members

PATRICK BOYD

CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON AIA

CHARLOTTE KONCZAL ESQ.

ROBERT MACIAS

JOE MOORE

CRAIG SCHARTON, M.S.

Assistant Director

KARANA HATTERSLEY-DRAYTON, M.A.

Secretary

Historic Preservation Project Manager

WILL TACKETT, Planner III

Any interested person may appear at the public hearing and present written testimony, or speak in favor or against the matters scheduled on the agenda.

If you challenge these matters in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised in oral or written testimony at or before the close of the hearing.

The meeting room is accessible to the physically disabled, and the services of a translator can be made available. Requests for additional accommodations for the disabled, signers, assistive listening devices, or translators should be made one week prior to the meeting. Please call the Historic Preservation Project Manager at 621-8520.

The Historic Preservation Commission welcomes you to this meeting.

April 23, 2012

MONDAY

5:30 p.m.

City Hall, Second Floor, CONFERENCE ROOM A, 2600 FRESNO STREET

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

A . Approve minutes of March 26, 2012.

III. APPROVE AGENDA

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

V. CONTINUED MATTERS

- A. Review and Provide Comments on Revisions to the *Draft Policy and Procedures Manual for Enforcing the Historic Preservation Ordinance* Pursuant to FMC 12-1626.

Staff Recommendation: Review revisions and provide comments to staff.

VI. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. Update on Historic Preservation Watch List (Howard Lacy, Senior Community Revitalization Specialist).

Staff Recommendation: Receive report. No action is required.

- B. Pursuant to FMC 12-1606(b)(4) Discuss and Provide Preliminary Comments on Potential Revisions to the Historic Resources Element of the 2035 General Plan Update.

1. Presentation by Advance Planning Division Staff (City of Fresno) on Status of 2035 General Plan Update.

2. Discussion of Potential Amendments to the Historic Resources Element for the 2035 Fresno General Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Agenda item is informational only. No action is required.

- C. Status Report on Helm Home (HP# 112) Located at 1749 L Street.

Staff Recommendation: Informational report, no action is required.

- D. Report by Outreach Sub-committee for 2012 Work Plan

Staff Recommendation: Receive report.

VII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

VIII. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

- A. Members of the Commission

- B. Staff

1. "Fresno's Architectural Heritage: The Cal Connection," Tuesday, April 17, 7 PM
Fulton 55.

- C. General Public

IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING: May 21st, 2012.

X. ADJOURNMENT

2600 Fresno Street, Third Floor

Historic Preservation Commission Action Agenda

The following actions were taken by the Commission. Minutes from the meeting will be forthcoming as staff resources allow.

March 26, 2012

MONDAY

5:30 p.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:** *The meeting was called to order by Chair Molly LM Smith at 5:37 PM.*

Commissioners Present: *Molly LM Smith, Don Simmons Ph.D., Patrick Boyd, Charlotte Konczal Esq. and Joe Moore.*

Commissioners Absent: *Christopher Johnson AIA and Robert Macias.*

Staff Present: *Karana Hattersley-Drayton (Historic Preservation Project Manager/Secretary to the Commission) and Joann Zuniga (Recording Secretary in lieu of Will Tackett, on vacation).*

II. APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

A . There were no minutes to approve.

- III. APPROVE AGENDA:** *There were no changes to the agenda; approved, 5-0.*

- IV. CONSENT CALENDAR:** *There were no items on the consent calendar.*

V. CONTINUED MATTERS

- A.** *Review and Provide Comments on Revisions to the Draft Policy and Procedures Manual for Enforcing the Historic Preservation Ordinance Pursuant to FMC 12-1626.*

Staff Recommendation: Review revisions and provide comments to staff.

Staff had no new information to report.

VI. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A.** *Consideration of Approval of Request by the Property Owner to Recommend To the City Council the Designation of the George H. Walley Residence Located at 1338 N Street to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources and Adoption of Findings Necessary to Support Recommendation Pursuant to FMC 12-1609 (**ACTION ITEM**).*

On a vote of 5-0 the Commission supported the staff recommendation, finding the Walley Home eligible to the Local Register under Criterion iii and forwarding this recommendation to the Fresno City Council for consideration.

- B. Consider Recommendation to the City Council the Designation of the Black's Package Store Located at 755 Van Ness Avenue to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources and Adoption of Findings Necessary to Support Recommendation Pursuant to FMC 12-1609 **(ACTION ITEM)**.

On a vote of 5-0 the Commission supported the staff recommendation, finding Black's Package Store eligible for designation to the Local Register under criteria i, ii and iii and forwarding this recommendation to the Fresno City Council for consideration.

- C. Consider Recommendation to the City Council the Designation of the Droge Building Located at 802 Van Ness Avenue to Fresno's Local Register of Historic Resources and Adoption of Findings Necessary to Support Recommendation Pursuant to FMC 12-1609 **(ACTION ITEM)**.

On a vote of 5-0 the Commission found that the Droge Building was eligible for listing on the Local Register of Historic Resources under criteria i and ii and requested that this recommendation be forwarded to the City Council for review.

In further discussions the Commission recommended strategies for helping to close the funding gap which preservation of the exterior walls will entail in the proposed housing project. Staff offered to contact representatives of the Japanese-American community who may be interested in the role the Droge Building played during the internment process.

- D. Pursuant to FMC 12-1606 (b)(6) Review and Provide Comments on the Merced to Fresno Section Project EIR/EIS Draft Findings of Effect, March 2012 **(ACTION ITEM)**.

The Commission engaged in a lively discussion about the document, following a Power Point presentation by staff. Commissioners found that the proposed HST Project will potentially have an Adverse Effect on the Forestiere Underground Gardens (due to potential traffic impacts in particular) and agreed with the Authority that the Impacts to Roeding Park, the Weber Overcrossing and the Belmont Circle (complex) represented Adverse Effects. Various mitigation strategies were suggested and these comments will be forwarded to the California High-Speed Rail Authority, pursuant to Fresno's role as a Consulting Party on the Project.

- E. Report by Outreach Sub-committee for 2012 Work Plan: Review and Approve Draft Invitation for Historic Resources Information Network **(ACTION ITEM)**.

The Commission discussed the draft letter to preservation partners and strategies for posting the letter and/or whether a direct invitation for a meeting to initiate networking was best. The Sub-committee will confer over the next few days.

VII. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

There was no Chair report.

VIII. UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

March 26, 2012

A. Members of the Commission

1. Sub-Committee for the José Garcia Adobe.

There was no report from this committee.

Don Simmons, Ph.D. announced a special workshop/conference at Fresno State on May 24-26th. Details and flyer to follow.

B. Staff

1. Update on Status of the McKay Home (HP#44) Located at 201 N. Clark Street.

Staff reported that conditions of approval for the Site Plan Review have not been met; that corrections to the back check of plans for the home and garage have been sent to the property owner, and that staff had met with a representative of the property to discuss.

2. "Fresno's Architectural Heritage: The Cal Connection," Tuesday, April 17, 7 PM
Fulton 55, with Karana Hattersley-Drayton, Kiel Famellos-Schmidt, Paul Halajian AIA,
Martin Temple AIA, Jim Oakes AIA(E) and Robin Goldbeck.

Staff announced this upcoming outreach activity and invited commissioners to attend.

C. General Public

No public members were in attendance and thus there were no items presented for consideration.

IX. NEXT REGULAR MEETING: April 23, 2012.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Karana Hattersley-Drayton

Secretary

Historic Preservation Project Manager

DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Watch List

April 5, 2012

Team members: Karana Hattersley-Drayton (Historic Preservation Project Manager); Will Tackett (Planner III); Howard Lacy (Senior Community Revitalization Specialist)

Recent Projects and Decisions:

- **Flora Montague Bungalow Court** (approval of project proposals with a compromise solution on window replacement; in progress)
- **Forestiery Underground Gardens** (complaints by property owner on eastern parcel regarding maintenance of fence by Ric Forestiery family on border, collapsing "souvenir tunnel"...) Anthony Forestiery family has made inquiries with archaeologists but no commitments.
- **L Street in-fill** (east side of L at San Joaquin), CEQA litigation pending.
- **Armenian Town Homes**, relocation and renovation (Phase I).
- **Helm Home**, 1749 L Street (HP#112) Housing Authority is preparing an RFP for a tenant improvement, contractors walk-through 4.19.12.
- **The McKay Home** 201 N. Clark Street (HP#044). *(Benjamin Rash, assigned staff. Met with property manager; report 3.26 to HPC; site plan still needs corrections).*
- **California Products Company** (former office) 3000 E. Butler (HP#83); *Property was indeed fenced but fire 3.31 for a total loss.*
- **Jose Garcia (Brewer) Adobe**, 5901 West Shaw Avenue (HP# 227). *(Property has been fenced... Kevin Watkins has made some site visits; most recent status? New owner has purchased former tenant map)*
- **Sham's Rio Grande Service Station**, 205 Fulton Street (HP#246). *(Additional fire damage, status?)*

Historic Preservation Watch List:

- **Cowdrey Home**, 330 N. Park (HP#033), non-permitted change-out of windows, broken stairs and balustrade *(staff, needs to send owner a letter)*
- **Collins Home** 1752 L (Heritage property) owned by Granville and boarded; problems with vagrants
- **The Donahoo Home** 103 North Park Avenue (HP#218) *(letter sent by khd; response from owner to abide by code and historic preservation issues; needs actual code violations from DCR).*
- **The Frank J. Craycroft Home** (HP#182) 6545 N. Palm Avenue. *(Property owner and representative of the owner met with staff and Kevin Watkins; rep made presentation at October 24, 2011 meeting; no further report from owner on progress to either market the property or address issues, including bee infestation, vacant building, etc.*
- **Parker-Nash Building**, 1462 Broadway (HP# 226) *concern raised by Commissioners at November HPC regarding issues with the roof).*

- **Hotel Fresno**, 1257 Broadway (HP#166) *(back at the City Council meeting 1.26 regarding financing issues).*
- **PGE Building (Theatre 3)** 1544 Fulton Street (HP#164). *(owned by the City of Fresno; now isolated; need to keep a watch for vagrants/break-ins.)*
- **Bank of Italy**
- **Fresno Memorial Auditorium** *(working with director of the Vet Museum to find way to abate falling ceiling tiles in lobby)*



REPORT TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM NO. VIB

HPC MEETING: 04/23/2012

April 23, 2012

FROM: CRAIG SCHARTON, Assistant Director
Development and Resource Management Department

APPROVED BY

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

BY: KARANA HATTERSLEY-DRAYTON 
Historic Preservation Project Manager
Secretary, Historic Preservation Commission

SUBJECT: PURSUANT TO FMC12-1606(b)(4) DISCUSS AND PROVIDE PRELIMINARY COMMENTS
ON POTENTIAL REVISIONS TO THE HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT FOR THE 2035
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

The City of Fresno is in the process of updating the 2025 Fresno General Plan and Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR). This work will also include a new implementing zoning and development code. Pursuant to FMC 12-1606(b)(4), the Historic Preservation Commission is requested to consider possible revisions to the Historic Resources Element for this 2035 General Plan Update. Tonight's presentation will initiate a conversation on the topic which will be followed in the future by specific recommendations and requests for action.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fresno has initiated an update of the 2025 General Plan (FGP) and Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) as provided for by the State of California's ten-year planning timeframe. Following 18 meetings of a General Plan Citizens Committee and 14 community public information meetings, five conceptual alternatives were presented to the Fresno City Council first on April 5th and then again on April 19th. The intent of the General Plan and code update is to "refocus the City's long range planning vision for the metropolitan area through the year 2035 and provide for modernization of the implementing zoning and subdivision ordinances within a unified development code" (Council staff report, Exhibit A). Once an alternative is chosen the work of revising Plan elements will begin, including consideration of changes and additions to the 2025 General Plan's historic resources policies. Tonight's agenda item includes a summary presentation by the City's Advanced Planning staff on work to date on the updated General Plan, as well as a preliminary discussion by staff and commissioners of potential revisions to General Plan policies for historic resources .

BACKGROUND

California law requires that local governments adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the county or city...." This "constitution for future development," to quote the California Supreme Court, becomes the roadmap for land use decisions in the adopted general plan area. General Plans include seven required elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open-space, noise and safety. Although in theory historic preservation can be an optional stand-alone element, within the Fresno General Plan it has been incorporated under Resource Conservation, along with air quality, agricultural land, mineral resources, energy conservation and native plants and wildlife. The framework for most

General Plans includes goals, policies and implementation action. The City's 2025 General Plan goals, objectives and policies for "historic resources" are attached (Exhibit B).

CONCLUSION

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (FMC 12-1606 (b)(4) provides that one duty and power of the Historic Preservation Commission is to "develop and recommend the adoption of a Historic Preservation Element for the General Plan of the City of Fresno in accordance with the requirements of the Certified Local Government." Incidentally, a local government must adopt a historic preservation plan or element as part of the jurisdiction's General Plan, prior to or upon applying for CLG status, a qualification which Fresno met in 1996. The Commission is asked to review the current Historic Resources section of the 2025 Plan as well as the other informational attachments and consider what revisions to the 2035 General Plan it may wish to recommend for future action.

- Attachments:
- Exhibit A - Report to the City Council, "Review and Select a Preferred Alternative For the Preparation of the 2035 Fresno General Plan Update," 5 April 2012.
 - Exhibit B - Historic Resources Objectives and Policies, 2025 Fresno General Plan.
 - Exhibit C - "Urban Form Working Paper: Historic Preservation," Karana Hattersley-Drayton 13 April 2012.
 - Exhibit D - "Plan Ahead: Preservation in General Plans," Power Point Presentation By Lucinda Woodward, California Office of Historic Preservation 18 June 2010.
 - Exhibit E - Selections from "State of California General Plan Guidelines," Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2003
(http://opr.ca.gov/s_generalplanguidelines.php).

April 5, 2012

FROM: MARK SCOTT, Interim Director
Development and Resource Management Department

BY: KEITH BERGTHOLD, Assistant Director
Development and Resource Management Department

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE
2035 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

1. Review and consider the alternatives analysis reports prepared by City Staff and Consultants and the recommendations of the General Plan Citizens Committee for Alternative 'D' and the Fresno City Planning Commission for Alternative 'A' as the Preferred Alternative for the 2035 General Plan Update.
2. Interim Director and Assistant Director for the Development and Resource Management Department also recommend Alternative 'A' as the general plan land use Preferred Alternative.

Selection of the Preferred Alternative will guide work on, and be implemented by, an updated Development Code. It will also allow staff and consultants to proceed with the completion of the plan text, land use maps, circulation system improvements, noise contours, proposed parks, trails, bikeways and open space network, and with the preparation of the baseline environmental analysis information, that will be represented by the Draft 2035 General Plan scheduled to be considered by City Council in July 2012.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fresno has initiated a program to prepare an update of the 2025 Fresno General Plan (FGP) and Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) together with a new implementing zoning and development code utilizing DOE Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG), HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative, and California Strategic Growth Council Sustainable Communities grant funding. The firm of Dyett & Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners, and MW Steele Group Urban Designers and Planners, which both have extensive experience in working with communities in the San Joaquin Valley region, were retained to provide professional consulting services to lead this effort. A 17-member General Plan Citizens Committee was subsequently appointed by the City Council and the Mayor to work with and advise the Sustainability Services Long Range Planning staff and consultants in this effort to formulate a general plan update.

Following 18 Citizen Advisory Committee meetings, as well as 14 community public information meetings and Planning Commission briefings, four conceptual alternatives were presented to the Advisory Committee and the Fresno City Planning Commission for consideration and selection of a preferred alternative. In addition to the four alternatives prepared by the City's planning team and a fifth alternative presented by the Building Industry Association of Fresno-Madera Counties was considered. The attached GP Alternatives Report, Fiscal Analysis Report, Rapid Fire Analysis, and Summary Comparison Evaluations were provided to the GP Citizens

Advisory and Planning Commission and posted on the City's website for public access and review. On March 19th the Advisory Committee recommended the selection of Alternative 'D' as the preferred alternative. On March 21st the Fresno City Planning Commission recommended the selection of Alternative 'A' as the preferred alternative. The staff recommends that the City Council consider the information provided by the attached descriptions and comparisons of the alternatives and select a preferred conceptual alternative. The direction provided by City Council selection of a preferred conceptual plan will allow the City's planning team to complete preparation of the plan text with statements of goals, objectives policies and other implementing strategies, plus land use maps and other required elements of a complete draft General Plan. Selection of a preferred conceptual alternative will also allow the planning team and the environmental consultants to prepare baseline environmental impact information. The draft general plan update including land use plan and circulation maps together with other appropriate illustrations and written text will be presented to the Advisory Commission and Planning Commission in June 2012, and to the City Council in July 2012 for initiation of the Preferred Alternative in the form of a Draft General Plan document for completion of environmental review documentation (MEIR) and public hearings.

BACKGROUND

The City's program to update the 2025 Fresno General Plan together with preparation of new implementing zoning and development codes is a part of the Sustainable Fresno effort within the Development and Resource Management Department which has been funded by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program and HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative, and a state grant from the California Strategic Growth Council Sustainable Communities grant funding. The DOE grant was provided to the City of Fresno for the Energy Efficiency Survey program and to encourage comprehensive energy conservation and efficiency in Fresno's land use planning and property development standards. The other grants were provided to integrate long term community sustainability principles and practices into land use planning and zoning in Fresno.

The general plan and code update effort will refocus the City's long range planning vision for the metropolitan area through the year 2035 and provide for modernization of the implementing zoning and subdivision ordinances within a unified development code. The 2025 Fresno General Plan was adopted In November 2002 and will soon reach the State's ten-year planning timeframe for consideration of a comprehensive update. Additionally, while the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) has been augmented by subsequent adoption of general plan air quality and climate mitigation policy measures, it is now crucial for this document to be comprehensively updated in order to preserve its optimal usefulness as a project review and implementation streamlining tool. Furthermore, completion of the 2035 FGP update with accompanying Master Environmental Impact Report will facilitate the replacement of the City of Fresno's antiquated zoning and property development standards and procedures with a more streamlined and user friendly comprehensive development code.

The preparation and consideration of the updated 2035 FGP is in keeping with the settlement of a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuit filed by the Medical Advocates for Healthy Air (MAHA) which had contested the adoption of the 2025 Fresno General Plan and the adequacy of the Master Environmental Impact Report. In response to the identified concerns of MAHA, the City made a commitment to further examine the potential opportunities and air quality benefits of focused development within the conceptual activity centers and transit corridors identified by the 2025 FGP. The City entered into a professional services contract with the firm of Valley Planning and Research, which together with the firm of Community Design and Architecture has performed these analyses which inform corridor intensification opportunities. The general plan update work has benefited from the utilization of information provided by this activity center and corridor analysis together other fiscal, public facility and environmental resource performance analysis prepared as a

SELECTION OF 2035 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE

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part of the general plan update program. Information from these analyses is provided within the attached supporting documentation and is available in the many studies and reports posted at www.fresno.gov/newplan.

In addition the general plan update effort has been informed by the utilization of analysis provided by the other recent studies such as the second phase of the Fresno Public Transportation Infrastructure Study, the Bus Rapid Transit corridor analysis and the Southeast Growth Area (SEGA) study and preliminary draft plan.

During the past year, the Development and Resource Management Department, Sustainability Services Division long range planning team has been working with the General Plan Advisory Committee, appointed by the Mayor and City Council, and the project consultant team comprised of the firms of Dyett and Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners and the MW Steele Group, to prepare information and subject area analyses to inform the process of formulating and conceptual general plan alternative. This extensive background information has been reviewed with the Advisory Committee and the public utilizing numerous public meetings and the City's website. Fifteen documents are presently available in electronic format on the General Plan website page including the Map Atlas of existing conditions and five working papers addressing the topics of Economic Development, Urban Form, Healthy Communities, Transportation and Resource Conservation. In addition the conceptual plan Alternatives Analysis Report, Fiscal Impact Analysis of Concept Alternatives and General Plan Rapid Fire Scenarios evaluation have been made available and reviewed by the Advisory Committee. These reports together with the conceptual alternatives have also been extensively reviewed in publicly noticed community information meetings as well as discussed with various community and stakeholder interest groups including the Building Industry of Fresno and Madera Counties, the Building Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative groups, and many others within Fresno.

Summary Description of Concept Alternatives 'A' through 'D'

Using information provided by these foundational studies the planning team formulated three conceptual alternatives (identified as A, B and C) reflecting a range of land use type and intensity allocations to accommodate updated projections of population and employment growth through the year 2035. Alternatives A and B provided concepts which could accommodate projected growth within the presently planned urban boundary and Sphere of Influence. Alternative C reflected growth to be accommodated with a greater proportion of lower density residential development necessitating an expansion of these boundaries. Subsequent to the discussion of these alternatives, the Citizens Advisory Committee requested that a fourth alternative (identified as D) be formulated which was a hybrid combination of the first three and envisioned intensified development of infill areas together with a more moderate expansion of the planned urban boundary. In response to these concepts, a group representing the BIA prepared a fifth alternative (identified as E) which reflected their perspective of the need to accommodate additional capacity for low to moderate density residential development within an expanded growth boundary.

The attached documents including the Fresno General Plan and Development Code Update Alternatives Report describe and compare the four Alternatives A through D in detail. Information is also attached pertaining to Alternative E. The alternatives report generally describes the first four alternatives as follows:

- Alternative A "Boulevard Plan" focuses on the re-building of the primary corridors as a series of neighborhood and regional mixed use centers surrounded by higher density housing. About half of the projected residential growth is located in infill areas, on the corridors, and Downtown, with the balance in growth areas. This alternative projects to generate the lowest vehicle miles travelled per capita (VMT) with higher volumes along the major transportation corridors.

SELECTION OF 2035 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE

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- Alternative B "Growth Areas Plan" focuses on development located in the more peripheral growth areas of the adopted sphere of influence with a slightly lower over-all density compared to Alternative A. It envisions some modest re-building of the primary transit corridors with higher density mixed use infill development, but without the emphasis upon mixed use centers. This alternative projects to generate higher VMT than Alternative A.
- Alternative C "Expanded Sphere of Influence Plan" follows the prevailing patterns of existing land uses and densities with modest attention to primary transit corridors comparable to Alternative B. It would accommodate more peripheral development with a future expansion of the sphere of influence to the southeast. This land use concept projects to generate the highest VMT and average trip length of the four alternatives although it generate less travel demand along the primary corridors.
- Alternative D "Hybrid Plan" combines aspects of alternatives A, B and C with less expansion of the Sphere of Influence in comparison to Alternative C. This alternative projects to generate VMT per capita and average trip length comparable to Alternative B and less traffic volume on the major transportation corridors than Alternative A but results in the highest freeway traffic volumes of the the four alternatives.

Summary of Guiding Principles Developed by the General Plan Citizens Committee

The General Plan Citizens Committee developed and recommended the following Guiding Principles for the General Plan Update and to use in evaluating the concept alternatives as described in more detail in the General Plan Alternatives Report for the General Plan Citizens Committee:

- Opportunity, Economic Development, Business and Job Creation
- A Successful and Competitive Downtown
- A City that Values Resource Conservation, Efficiency, and Resilience
- Improved Air Quality
- A City that Values Agriculture
- Protect, Preserve and Enhance Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources
- More Choices (A Diversity of Housing, Jobs, and Neighborhoods)
- Diversity of Urban and Suburban Communities
- Complete Neighborhoods for New Development
- Healthy Communities and Improved Quality of Life in Existing Neighborhoods
- Corridors and Centers that Support Transit Use
- Multi-Modal Connectivity and Complete Streets
- Existing Public Infrastructure and Service Deficiencies Cured; Investing for Increased Competitiveness in the Future
- Planning and Investment Partnerships Among Land Owners, Developers, Public Agencies, Communities and Institutions
- A City with A Spirit of Citizenship
- A Model for Growth Management Planning and regional Policy and Cooperation
- Recreational Opportunities

SELECTION OF 2035 FRESNO GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE

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The following is a summary comparison of residential allocations and gross densities that define the various concept alternatives.

Summary of Residential Capacity Comparisons of GP Alternatives by Sub-Region¹

Sub-Region	Alt. 'A'	Alt. 'B'	Alt. 'C'	Alt. 'D'	BIA - Alt. 'E'
	Housing Units / Gross Density Per Acre ²	Housing Units / Gross Density Per Acre	Housing Units / Gross Density Per Acre	Housing Units / Gross Density Per Acre	Housing Units / Gross Density Per Acre
Totals	76,000 / 9.4	79,000 / 7.5	79,000 / 5.3	80,000 / 6.7	79,000 / 5.3 or less³
Infill – Total	28,000 / 11.8	15,000 / 8.5	15,000 / 5.8	21,000 / 7.8	17,000 / 6.4
• Corridors	9,500 / 11.8	3,000 / 8.5	3,000 / 5.8	5,000 / 7.8	5,000 / 7.8
• Non-Corridors	18,500 / 11.8	12,000 / 8.5	12,000 / 5.8	16,000 / 7.8	12,000 / 5.8
Downtown	11,000 ⁴	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000
Infill and Downtown Subtotal / % of Total	39,000 / 51%	26,000 / 33%	26,000 / 33%	32,000 / 40%	28,000 / 35%
North Growth Area	2,000 / 6.3	2,000 / 6.8	2,500 / 5.0	2,500 / 5.7	2,500 / 5.0
Southwest Growth Area	9,000 / 8.1	10,000 / 6.6	8,000 / 4.4	10,500 / 5.9	8,000 / 4.4
West Growth Area	14,500 / 7.6	15,000 / 7.3	14,500 / 5.3	17,000 / 6.1	14,500 / 5.3
SEGA	11,500 ⁵	26,000	19,500	11,500	11,500
SOI Expansion	0	0	8,500 / 6.0	6,500 / 7.2	14,500 / 2.19-4.98
Growth Area Subtotal / % of Total	37,000 / 49%	53,000 / 67%	53,000 / 67%	48,000 / 60%	51,000 / 65%

¹ For Details - Please refer to Page VI – General Plan Alternatives Report – For the General Plan Citizens Committee at www.fresno.gov/newplan - and other related documents posted there.

² Gross Density calculation does not exclude dedications of public rights-of-way and other land for public facilities which usually total approximately 25% of total land area and increase net density calculations proportionately. Calculations of density in all alternatives do not include Downtown or SEGA – figures are for comparison among alternatives and do not represent absolute totals that can be achieved when Downtown or SEGA are included.

³ Building Industry Assoc. - BIA Alternative E – Uses Alt 'C' specs as a platform for modifying SEGA by reducing 'C' level allocation in SEGA by 8,000 dwelling units and shifting 2,000 of these units to Corridor Infill using Alt. 'D' specs and allocating the other 6,000 dwelling units to the Southwest SOI expansion shown in Alt. 'C' (BIA E also adds another 640 acres to land area of expansion of ½ west of Grant from Shields to Belmont) at a density designated by the BIA as Single Family Medium Low consistent with 2025 GP land use designations which indicate a range from 2.19-4.98 units per acre for the increased total of 14,500 units in the SOI expansion area. Based upon the math of Alt. E – it would perform like Alt. 'C' in the various fiscal, transportation, resource and environmental evaluations conducted for Alts 'A' through 'D'.

⁴ Density Not Calculated in Downtown area – Assumed the same for all alternatives

⁵ Densities in SEGA are not calculated – densities and land areas consumed will depend upon the Alternative selected by City Council – and should be equal to or higher than the densities in the growth areas in the associated alternative.

Additional Alternatives Analyses and Comparisons

Separate fiscal and multi-variable comparison analyses of the concept alternatives were conducted and are represented by the attached 'Fiscal Impact Analysis of Concept Alternatives' prepared by Economic Planning Systems under sub-contract to Dyett & Bhatia, and by the 'Fresno General Plan Rapid Fire Scenarios and Co-Benefits Analysis' prepared by Calthorpe Associates working with Long Range Planning and Sustainable Fresno Energy Efficiency Staff and graciously offered to the City of Fresno at no cost. (A paying customer would have paid \$25,000 for this consulting work and analysis.) Calthorpe Associates developed the Rapid Fire assessment model for state agencies and has prepared state wide analyses represented by 'Vision California' and analyses for the Southern California Association of Governments and other regional planning entities. Calthorpe works closely on model development, deployment, and data sharing with the University of California at Davis and The Governor's Office of Planning and Research, among others. Fresno is the first city to have a calibrated assessment using the Rapid Fire Model for a General Plan formulation effort. A Staff summary of the three comparative evaluation documents is also attached and these will be reviewed with City Council at the April 5th public hearing.

Attachments:

General Plan Alternatives Report for the General Plan Citizens Committee

Fiscal Impact Analysis of Concept Alternatives

Fresno General Plan Rapid Fire Scenarios and Co-Benefit Analysis

Summary Comparison of Three Evaluations: GP Alternatives Report for GP Citizens Committee, EPS Fiscal Impact Analysis, and Rapid Fire Scenarios

It is also noted that during 1982 and 1983 there were extensive meetings among the local jurisdictions of Fresno County, Fresno City, and the City of Clovis regarding issues of land use planning, the provision of urban services, and annexation. As a result of these meetings, a Joint Resolution on Metropolitan Planning was adopted by the above jurisdictions, providing direction for cooperative planning efforts over a period of 15 years. This general plan update has been conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the 1983 resolution.

California State Planning and Zoning Law (Government Code, Section 65300) also requires that the city prepare and adopt a general plan which addresses the seven following mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The mandated elements of the general plan must be legally adequate and internally consistent with one another. In addition, state law permits the city to address additional issues such as public facilities and services, energy, recreation, or any other subject that relates to the physical development of the city.

Together with the community and specific plans, the general plan has been designed to

1. Provide a blueprint for the growth of the city through the year 2025;
2. Guide the expansion of infrastructure and public services to meet the community needs;
3. Create an effective planning tool which is both efficient and responsive to citizens' needs;
4. Create a "user friendly" document that is easily understood and administered;
5. Incorporate policy and land use changes made through the community and specific planning process;
6. Provide appropriate planning and public services analysis for the expansion of the urban areas of the city;
7. Meet the requirements of state and local planning and zoning law.

General Plan Goals

The focal point of the general plan vision is the endeavor to judiciously utilize available resources to accommodate a moderate population growth while limiting outward expansion beyond the city's present planned urban boundary and substantially enhancing the established community's physical and social environment through revitalization of Fresno's existing urban core. Beyond this focal point, this vision is defined by 17 essential goals that have been identified through extensive discourse among elected office holders, professional staff, and representative citizen advocates of the community. Broad general plan goals intended to address potential opportunities as well as problems have been formulated and enumerated below, whereas detailed objectives and policies for carrying out the goals are presented in Chapter 4, Plan Elements, of this document. These goals are as follows:

1. Enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Fresno and plan for the projected population within the moderately expanded Fresno urban boundary in a manner which will respect physical, environmental, fiscal, economic, and social issues.

2. Pursue coordinated regional planning with Fresno and Madera Counties and the City of Clovis.
3. Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods, the downtown, and historical resources.
4. Promote a partnership among citizens, industry, and government which fosters well-planned and efficiently processed development.
5. Support the Growth Alternatives Alliance "Landscape of Choice-Principles and Strategies" as based upon the Ahwahnee Group Principles, both of which are included in the Appendix.
6. Coordinate land uses and circulation systems to promote a viable and integrated multi-modal transportation network.
7. Manage growth to balance Fresno's urban form while providing an adequate public service delivery system, which is fairly and equitably financed.
8. Provide opportunity for a variety of affordable housing throughout the Metropolitan Area.
9. Provide activity centers and intensity corridors within plan areas to create a mix of land uses and amenities to foster community identity and reduce travel.
10. Provide quality open space, park and recreational facilities and programs to support the projected population.
11. Protect, preserve, and enhance significant biological, archaeological, and paleontological resources and critical natural resources, including, but not limited to, air, water, agricultural soils, minerals, plants, and wildlife resources.
12. Develop urban design strategies to improve Fresno's visual image and enhance its form and function.
13. Plan for a healthy business and diversified employment environment, and provide adequate timely services to ensure that Fresno is competitive in the marketplace.
14. Protect and improve public health and safety.
15. Recognize, respect, and plan for Fresno's cultural, social, and ethnic diversity.
16. Work cooperatively with the local agricultural industry to conserve prime farmland and respect its importance as Fresno County's base economic resource.
17. Encourage fiscal and local agency planning policies that will assist in the annexation of unincorporated county islands within the City of Fresno Sphere of Influence.

F-18-e. Policy: Educational programs in the parkway can and should be conducted by a variety of organizations. These can include:

- public, parochial, and private educational institutions.
- history, art, mining, and environmental groups.
- park and recreational organizations.
- resource management agencies.
- the conservancy and its member agencies/organizations; in addition to having its own programs, the conservancy should seek cooperative relationships with the other organizations to maximize the variety and amount of educational programs using the parkway.

G. RESOURCE CONSERVATION ELEMENT

Challenges

The California Government Code requires that general plans address the conservation of natural resources and energy. The 2025 General Plan Resource Conservation Element is important because long-term development potential of Fresno depends heavily on the quality, quantity, and cost-effective availability of resources (such as water and energy) to support the expected population growth and development. Resource management also has major implications for public health and safety, and resources are intrinsic to maintaining the city's aesthetics, heritage, and its overall attractiveness. Collectively, these issues are perceived as "quality of life" and are major determinants of industries' and individuals' willingness to locate in and invest in the community. For these reasons, a strong commitment to resource protection is needed for Fresno's long-term economic stability and preservation of its property values.

Direction

This section of the Plan Elements chapter of the general plan constitutes the Natural Resource Conservation Element (and includes the Energy Conservation Element). It addresses the following topic areas:

1. **Air Quality.** Fresno lies in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin, a region with climate and topography that is predisposed to poor air quality. This region has had longstanding air quality problems and has chronically failed to attain national and state clean air standards for ozone (oxidants) and particulate matter (PM₁₀). The Fresno [-Clovis] Urbanized Area has also had intermittent, localized exceedances of carbon monoxide (CO) standards. Air quality must be improved and protected to assure that our atmosphere is clean and healthful, and to avoid sanctions for non-attainment. This Resource Conservation Element addresses issues not covered by other general plan elements (Regional Cooperation, Urban Form, Public Facilities, Open Space/Recreation) which provide direction on clean air-oriented land use, infrastructure development, and alternative transportation.

2. **Water Resources.** The Fresno area needs adequate quantities of water suitable for human consumption, recreation, and agriculture. In conjunction with the Metropolitan Water Resources Management Plan and the 2025 General Plan Regional Cooperation and Public Facilities Elements, this Resource Conservation Element provides policy direction toward assuring that these needs will be met in the long term.

3. **Agricultural Land.** California's Central Valley is one of the world's premier growing regions, and the economy of this area is based primarily on agriculture. The 2025 General Plan contains major policy direction aimed at protecting the Fresno area's valuable productive agricultural land from premature and inappropriate development. Basic direction is given in the Regional Cooperation and Urban Form Elements; this Resource Conservation Element addresses other aspects of the issue.

4. **Mineral Resources.** This section of the Resource Conservation Element (in conjunction with the Urban Form Element) is intended to assure that cost-effective locally available mineral resources (such as rock, gravel, and sand for concrete aggregate) are protected for future use by the construction industry, and that extraction of these resources is done in a responsible manner that provides for beneficial end uses of surface mining sites, as required by the California Public Resources Code (the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act). The 2025 General Plan update is being prepared after the State-mandated periodic update of the city's mineral resource policies, requiring that a more detailed background explanation precede these Resource Conservation Element objectives and policies.

5. **Energy Conservation.** In conjunction with the Urban Form and Public Facilities Elements, this section of the 2025 General Plan provides direction to reduce dependence on costly, nonrenewable sources of energy by maximizing energy-efficiency and the use of renewable, low-impact energy sources such as solar.

6. **Historic Resources.** Historic preservation helps a community retain physical links to significant architecture, persons, events, and landscapes from past time periods. As Fresno moves into the next century and intensifies its land uses, there will be development pressure on older sections of the city. This section of the Resource Conservation Element provides policy direction to protect, and to continue appropriate use of, Fresno's historic resources. Structures of architectural quality and locations of cultural significance (including prehistoric sites, structures, and neighborhoods/districts) are to be preserved through identification, listing on Historic Registers, monitoring, maintenance, and safeguarding of their settings.

7. **Native Plants and Wildlife.** Central California is a unique biological enclave, with a rich diversity of flora and fauna. The region's climate, soils, hydrology, and geographic isolation fostered resident species found nowhere else on earth and significant populations of more widely distributed species. Through agricultural, rural residential, and urban development, these species and their habitats are being diminished and marginalized. Native plants and wildlife should be protected to preserve ecological balance in the region, to help forestall or prevent further establishment of harmful exotic weeds and pests, to preserve their unique genetic capabilities, and to provide wildlife viewing and related recreational opportunities. In conjunction with the Urban Form and Open Space/Recreation Elements, and the Mineral Resources section of this Resource Conservation Element, this section of the 2025 General Plan provides policy direction to safeguard areas where these species can be preserved and enhanced.

G-9-a. Policy: The city shall continue its leadership role in energy conservation through its own facilities and operations.

- The city shall continue its existing beneficial energy conservation programs.
- All new construction and major renovations in municipal buildings shall conform to applicable Title 24 energy standards.

G-9-b. Policy: The city shall periodically consult with utilities and regulatory, and state-level planning agencies to refine service demand estimates and to facilitate area-wide energy distribution.

G-9-c. Policy: Through its regulation of land use planning and development, the city will provide for energy conservation.

- Current energy-efficient planning and construction guidelines will be maintained.
- Environmental review of development projects (including changes in land use designations) will include a description of energy consumption and conservation features that are, or feasibly could be, incorporated into these projects.
- Siting, building orientation, structural design, and landscaping of a proposed land use or development project will be considered in relation to energy efficiency. Energy efficiency will be a factor that is considered in the decision process for projects.
- In regard to the Solar Rights and Solar Shade Acts of 1978, the city shall observe provisions in state law regarding solar access and shall continue to study whether further legislation is necessary.
- At the interface of commercial or industrial and residential land uses, or the interface of multi-family with single-family residential land uses, height restrictions and/or setbacks should be used at the common boundary to ensure solar access to structures on both sides of the boundary.
- Updated information on California Title 24 and other energy conservation guidelines and measures will be made available to staff and the area construction industry.

Historic Resources

G-10. OBJECTIVE: Foster community pride, attract visitors and tourists to distinctive areas, provide recreational opportunities, enhance educational opportunities, and augment the body of scientific and historic knowledge through identification, appropriate recognition, and promotion of historic and cultural resources.

G-10-a. Policy: Establish, and periodically review, the defining criteria that characterize historic resources.

G-10-b. Policy: Historic structures, districts, sites, and landscape features shall be considered as those which:

- represent past eras, events, and persons important in history.
- provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past or are landmarks in the history of architecture.
- are unique and irreplaceable assets to the city and its neighborhoods or provide examples of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived, for this and future generations.
- designated historic districts shall be "living" examples of maintaining quality and continuity of historic resource material and the overall character of the neighborhood.

G-10-c. Policy: Unique prehistoric resource sites shall be considered as those archaeological and paleontological sites which:

- contain information needed to answer important scientific research questions.
- have special quality or unique features, such as being the oldest, largest, or most complete example of a particular type of site or are directly associated with a scientifically recognized prehistoric or historic event or person.

G-10-d. Policy: Utilizing a combination of historic preservation staff, citizen volunteers, and qualified professionals hired with available funds, conduct a survey of the general plan area to create and maintain a computerized database of building/housing stock information within the city's planning area, using an inventory system which includes relevant facts, including year of construction and other historic information as appropriate.

- Historic preservation staff will provide training, guidance, and oversight to assist and encourage citizen volunteers in conducting a first-level survey to identify all candidate historic resources by physical and cultural attributes such as age of the resource, architectural style, neighborhood siting, prominence in local history, and any special features or events associated with it.
- City staff will utilize results of the above survey to prepare grant applications and budget requests for more detailed surveys to determine the nature of potential historical resources indicated by the first level screening. The city will also use available funding and other contributions to conduct detailed surveys.
- Findings of detailed historical resource surveys will be archived in a permanent, retrievable, user-friendly database that is continually updated.
- The city will cooperate with other jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations to collect information on historic and candidate sites.

G-10-e. Policy: Facilitate community awareness of historic and cultural resources and encourage public participation in related programs.

- The city will develop resources to assist and encourage citizen participation in the implementation of historic preservation policies and programs.
- Develop a district-oriented approach for promoting the historic heritage of Fresno neighborhoods. Sponsor and assist in the development of "walking tours," portable multi-media presentations, brochures, and newsletters to promote Fresno's historic values and these areas' private and public preservation efforts.
- Promote and participate in federal, state, local, and privately sponsored grants, demonstration programs, and projects that are directed toward historic structure revitalization and modern-day adaptive reuses (such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Main Street Program").
- Enlarge the role of the Historic Preservation Commission in advising the city council, other legislative bodies, and the general public on the wide range of historic preservation issues.
- Coordinate with Caltrans, the State Office of Historic Preservation, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association, public utilities (such as railroad companies) and other agencies and interested parties to determine needs, design alternatives, and funding strategies for visitor information and entryway treatments that would encourage people to enjoy Fresno's historical and cultural features.

G-11. OBJECTIVE: Safeguard Fresno's heritage by preserving resources which reflect important cultural, social, economic, and architectural features so that community residents will have a foundation upon which to measure and direct physical change.

G-11-a. Policy: Continue and expand the city's comprehensive historic preservation program, as set forth in this Historic Resources component of the general plan.

G-11-b. Policy: The Historic Preservation Commission shall take a lead role in the following historic preservation activities:

- surveying, identifying, and recommending approval of the designation of historic resources, including conservation and heritage districts.
- making annual budget cycle funding requests to city, county, state, and federal agencies, and to private foundations and nonprofit public corporations and prioritizing which historic conservation projects should receive available city-administered funding for implementation of historic preservation objectives.

- appropriately staff the city historic preservation program to implement the city's historic preservation policies and programs.
- programs aimed at neighborhood improvement, including nuisance abatement, shall complement the preservation of cultural resources.
- increase cooperative efforts with the Fresno County Historic Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission.

G-11-c. Policy: Implement and broaden the resource conservation program as set forth by the Preservation of Historic Structures Ordinance.

- Perpetuate, protect, enhance, and revitalize historic resources.
- Encourage adaptive current uses of historic resources, while preserving their unique features.
- Zoning, building, fire, health, housing, landscape/xeriscape, and other related codes shall be liberally construed, and amended if necessary, to provide for a more supportive regulatory structure to assist in historic preservation objectives, while maintaining the essential level of protection for health and safety.
- Encourage the use of, and educate city staff on the use of, the State Historic Building Code. This code shall be used to guide plan checking and inspections in structures that have been recognized by the Historic Preservation Commission as qualified under the Historic Building Code.
- Before the issuance of a formal demolition order by the city involving structures over fifty (50) years old, potential Local Register listing shall be reviewed by historic preservation staff, and, if necessary, referred to the Historic Preservation Commission. This shall be subject to staffing levels and amendment of the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- Before any nonemergency removal of historic trees or landscape elements, the City Historic Preservation Commission shall be given an opportunity to review the proposed action and make a recommendation as to potential alternative actions.
- Prior to demolition, the city shall offer for sale all city-owned relocatable Local Register, National Register, or State Landmark structures acquired within public project boundaries to buyers prepared to relocate the structures. All such structures shall be offered for sale a minimum of 180 days. Preference will be given to buyers intending to relocate these structures to parcels in designated city historic districts.

- The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend to the city council that the city be the "purchaser of last resort" to acquire endangered structures that are on the Local or National Historic Register, or are State Historic Landmarks, and relocate them to other locations in historic districts. The commission and council shall establish criteria to prioritize the acquisition of endangered historic structures based upon economic feasibility for each individual project and the need to balance such commitments of financial resources so that an acquisition does not materially detract from accomplishing other priority projects which require public historic preservation funding.

G-11-d. Policy: Prehistoric resources (those containing archaeological and paleontological material) shall be protected.

- In any public or private project, it shall be a condition of project permits that work stop immediately in the immediate vicinity of the find if archaeological and/or nonhuman fossil material is encountered on the project site.
- If there are suspected human remains, the Fresno County Coroner shall be immediately contacted. If the remains or other archaeological materials are possibly Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission shall be immediately contacted, and the California Archeological Inventory's Southern San Joaquin Valley Information Center shall be contacted to obtain a referral list of recognized archaeologists.
- An archaeological assessment shall be conducted for the project if prehistoric human relics are found that were not previously assessed during the environmental assessment for the project. The site shall be formally recorded, and archaeologists' recommendations shall be made to the city on further site investigation or site avoidance/preservation measures.
- If nonhuman fossils are uncovered, the Museum of Paleontology at U.C. Berkeley shall be contacted to obtain a referral list of recognized paleontologists. If the paleontologist determines the material to be significant, it shall be preserved.

G-11-e. Policy: If the site of a proposed development or public works project is found to contain unique prehistoric (archaeological or paleontological) resources, and it can be demonstrated that the project will cause damage to these resources, reasonable efforts shall be made to permit any or all of the resource to be scientifically removed, or it shall be preserved in situ (left in an undisturbed state). In situ preservation may include the following options, or equivalent measures:

- amending construction plans to avoid prehistoric resources.
- setting aside sites containing these resources by deeding them into permanent conservation easements.

- capping or covering these resources with a protective layer of soil before building on the sites.
- incorporating parks, green space, or other open space in the project to leave prehistoric sites undisturbed and to provide a protective cover over them.
- in order to protect prehistoric resources from vandalism or theft, their location shall not be publicly disclosed until or unless the site is adequately protected.

G-11- f. Policy: Establish historic districts to recognize and protect areas with significant architectural and historic resources, including supporting districts. Develop strategies and plans for restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement of historic and supporting districts, to ensure their preservation and to provide an integrated program for compatible development within these neighborhoods.

- Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources as design themes in historic neighborhoods.
- Develop and implement "Historic/Heritage District Streets" policies in City Streetscape Master Plans.
- Adopt and maintain a list of designated Historic Streets, and depict these streets in the circulation elements of specific and community plans.
- Seek funding for installing, replacing, and repairing needed public facilities and street furniture which would enhance historic districts. Visible improvements, including landscaping, shall support the representative era of historic districts and their architectural themes.
- Provide protection for, and routine maintenance of, character-defining streetscape and landscape elements in historic districts.
- Save historically or architecturally significant structures by using available infill sites in historic districts. Preference shall be given to selling or using such city-owned sites for relocating privately-owned and publicly-owned historic structures.
- When evaluating subdivision applications and land use entitlements in historic districts, longstanding precedents for lot size and land uses (including mixed patterns of land use) shall be considered.
- Require compatible design when infill development or construction occurs in historically significant areas.
- Identify, promote, and participate in federal- and/or state-sponsored demonstration projects, such as the "Main Street Program" sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Encourage the use of a "Historic Facade Easements" program.

G-11-g. Policy: Achieve historic resource conservation goals through other community plans and programs.

- Integrate historic preservation into new development and redevelopment projects. Identify candidate and recognized historic resources in the early stages of plan preparation and policy development by coordinating historic preservation survey research with policies and design strategies (including landscaping and streetscape themes).
- Redevelopment areas shall be screened for possible historic resources which would be adversely affected by the redevelopment proposal. More detailed assessments shall be done on register candidate properties, and recommendations for the treatment of those properties shall be forwarded through the Historic Preservation Commission to redevelopment planning staff.
- Interdepartmental review procedures shall continue to ensure that preservation policies are respected in community decision-making. When proposals may affect historic resources, land use plans, development projects, capital improvement programs and public services delivery, plans shall be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission for comment on their compatibility with historic resources and preservation goals.
- When proposed plans, projects, policies, or programs conflict with historic preservation objectives, the Historic Preservation Commission's recommendations on resolving the conflict shall be considered by staff, planning commission, and the city council.
- Uphold historic preservation policies included in all approved city land use plans.

G-11-h. Policy: Assist in, or develop, new complementary and cooperative programs, both public and private, to promote the preservation of historic and cultural resources.

- Prepare National Historic Register applications for city-owned properties as appropriate.
- Maintain Fresno's Certified Local Government status under the state-administered program.
- Explore the feasibility of attaining Mills Act eligibility for qualifying Fresno sites.
- Host workshops and make information available to assist property owners in researching and preparing Local Register, California Landmark, and/or National Historic Register applications.
- Prepare and publish manuals to address appropriate and inappropriate types of modifications to historic buildings and to public areas in historic districts.
- Encourage the County of Fresno and other local jurisdictions to adopt complementary resolutions and ordinances to support historic preservation.

G-11-i. Policy: Develop methods to facilitate private ownership and upkeep of historic resources and to encourage private reinvestment in historic preservation.

- Assist the private sector in the development and promotion of programs to support the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic resources.
- Develop incentives and zoning bonus programs as methods to encourage the preservation of historic resources.
- Examine various financing strategies and public funding opportunities for use in the preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources.
- Establish, if feasible, monetary incentives (such as fee reductions, grants, and low-interest loan programs) for restoration or rehabilitation of historic resources.
- If feasible, implement tax incentives for the restoration and maintenance of historic resources.

Native Plants and Wildlife

G-12. OBJECTIVE: To provide for long-term preservation, enhancement, and enjoyment of plant, wildlife, and aquatic habitat resources in the Fresno area by protecting, improving, and restoring these resources.

G-12-a. Policy: Support state, federal, and local programs to acquire significant habitat areas in and near Fresno for permanent protection and/or conjunctive educational and recreational use.

G-12-b. Policy: The City of Fresno will participate in cooperative, multi-jurisdictional approaches (involving the Counties of Fresno and Madera, the City of Clovis, the San Joaquin River Conservancy, the Metropolitan Flood Control District, and other agencies and organizations) for area-wide habitat conservation plans to preserve and protect rare, threatened, and endangered species that could be adversely affected by continued population growth and development.

G-12-c. Policy: In development projects, consider the incorporation of natural features (such as ponds to be designed and managed for habitat values, or hedgerows and wooded strips) such that these features can serve as a buffer for adjacent natural areas and/or an enhancement to the ecological values of Fresno.

G-12-d. Policy: Projects that could adversely affect rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife and vegetative species (or may have impacts on wildlife, fish, and vegetation restoration programs) may be approved only when findings are made by the California Department of Fish and Game (and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as appropriate) that adequate mitigation measures are incorporated in the project's design.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

General Plan Guidelines

2003



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Introduction

Each city and county in California must prepare a comprehensive, long term general plan to guide its future. To assist local governments in meeting this responsibility, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research is required to adopt and periodically revise guidelines for the preparation and content of local general plans (Government Code §65040.2).

The 2003 edition of the *General Plan Guidelines* supercedes all previous editions. Important changes since the 1998 edition include the following:

- ◆ Guidance for addressing environmental justice in the general plan.
- ◆ Guidance on developing optional water and energy elements.
- ◆ Expanded guidance on public participation in the development of the general plan.
- ◆ Revised and expanded housing element guidelines.
- ◆ Guidance on developing optional water and energy elements.
- ◆ Expanded guidance on consolidation of individual general plan elements.
- ◆ Suggested reporting formats for the annual general plan progress report.

The 2003 edition of the *General Plan Guidelines* is the first to incorporate an extensive public review process. OPR hosted a series of forums in early 2002 to gain preliminary input into the *General Plan Guidelines*. A preliminary draft of the revised *General Plan Guidelines* was available for public review from October through December, 2002. Two public hearings were held in Sacramento in December, 2002, with teleconference links to Eureka, Alameda, Bakersfield and San Diego. A second draft was released in July 2003 for a 30 day review period. The final document reflects many of the suggestions received by OPR during this process.

This document is arranged into the following chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the general plan. Chapter 2 provides guidance on integrating environ-

mental justice into the general plan, and relates environmental justice to the broader issue of sustainable development. Chapter 3 outlines how to prepare or revise the general plan within the framework of planning law.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the statutorily required general plan elements, citing relevant court interpretations and Attorney General opinions. Chapter 5 discusses formatting options for the general plan and opportunities for element integration and consolidation. Chapter 6 offers suggestions on preparing selected optional elements and includes new guidance for energy and water elements.

Chapter 7 reviews the California Environmental Quality Act's integral role in the general plan process. Chapter 8 discusses the role of public participation in the general plan process.

Chapter 9 discusses a wide range of general plan implementation techniques and offers suggestions on how to prepare the required annual general plan implementation report.

Chapter 10 explains the local general plan's relationship to other statutory planning requirements, such as the California Coastal Act, the Seismic Hazards Act, and the federal and state Endangered Species Acts.

The *General Plan Guidelines* concludes with several appendices, a glossary, and a bibliography of both printed and on-line planning references.

The *General Plan Guidelines* is advisory, not mandatory. Nevertheless, it is the state's only official document explaining California's legal requirements for general plans. Planners, decision-making bodies, and the public depend upon the *General Plan Guidelines* for help when preparing local general plans. The courts have periodically referred to the *General Plan Guidelines* for assistance in determining compliance with planning law. For this reason, the *General Plan Guidelines* closely adheres to statute and case law. It also relies upon commonly accepted principles of contemporary planning practice. When the words "shall" or "must" are used, they represent a statutory or other legal requirement. "May" and "should" are used when there is no such requirement.

Milestones in California's Planning Law

- 1907** First Subdivision Map Act enacted.
- 1915** Cities authorized to create planning commissions.
- 1917** Initial zoning law enacted.
- 1927** Cities and counties authorized to prepare master plans (general plans).
- 1929** Adoption of master plans made mandatory for those cities and counties establishing planning commissions (based largely on the 1928 U.S. Department of Commerce Model Standard City Planning Enabling Act). Subdivision Map Act revised enabling local governments to require dedication of improvements.
- 1937** All cities and counties required to adopt master plans. Cities and counties authorized to prepare "precise plans" (similar to specific plans of today) to implement the master plan.
- 1953** Planning law recodified into Government Code §65000, et seq.
- 1955** Land use and circulation elements required in the general plan.
- 1965** Planning and Zoning Law reorganized. Cities and counties authorized to prepare "specific plans."
- 1967** Housing element required in the general plan (effective July 1, 1969).
- 1970** Conservation and open-space elements required in the general plan.
- 1971** Safety, seismic safety, noise, and scenic highway elements required in the general plan. Zoning and subdivision approvals required to be consistent with the adopted general plan.
- 1973** OPR issues first *General Plan Guidelines*.
- 1974** Subdivision Map Act recodified from the Business and Professions Code into the State Planning and Zoning Law within the Government Code.
- 1975** Legislature clarifies statute on general plans' internal consistency.
- 1980** Detailed content standards and adoption procedures added to the housing element requirement. Appeals court says public works must be consistent with general plans (*Friends of B Street*).
- 1982** Appeals court says land use and circulation elements must correlate (*Twaine Harte*).
- 1984** Planning statutes substantially revised, seismic safety and scenic highways elements dropped as required elements, seismic safety merged with safety element.
- 1990** California Supreme Court says zoning in conflict with the general plan invalid (*Leshner v. Walnut Creek*).
- 2001** Legislature requires *General Plan Guidelines* to include environmental justice.

This summary does not include other major planning and land use statutes that have been important in shaping local planning, such as the California Environmental Quality Act, the Williamson Act, the California Coastal Act, and the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act.

CHAPTER I

General Plan Basics

All statutory references are to the California Government Code unless otherwise noted.

California state law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning” (§65300). The California Supreme Court has called the general plan the “constitution for future development.” The general plan expresses the community’s development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private.

As will be discussed in Chapter 9, the policies of the general plan are intended to underlie most land use decisions. Pursuant to state law, subdivisions, capital improvements, development agreements, and many other land use actions must be consistent with the adopted general plan. In counties and general law cities, zoning and specific plans are also required to conform to the general plan.

In addition, preparing, adopting, implementing, and maintaining the general plan serves to:

- ◆ Identify the community’s land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development.
- ◆ Provide a basis for local government decision-making, including decisions on development approvals and exactions.
- ◆ Provide citizens with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of their communities.
- ◆ Inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities and counties of the ground rules that guide development within a particular community.

COMPREHENSIVENESS

Every city and county must adopt “a comprehensive, long term general plan” (§65300). The general plan must cover a local jurisdiction’s entire planning area and address the broad range of issues associated with a city’s or county’s development.

Geographic Comprehensiveness

The plan must cover the territory within the boundaries of the adopting city or county as well as “any

land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (§65300). For cities, this means all territory within the city limits, both public and private. Counties must address all unincorporated areas.

When establishing its planning area, each city should consider using its sphere of influence as a starting point. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in every county adopts a sphere of influence for each city to represent “the probable physical boundaries and service area” of that city (§56076). Although there is no direct requirement that the sphere and the planning area match, the former provides a convenient measure of the city’s region of interest.

A county should consider the general plans of every city within the county in its own plans. City planning policies may be reflected in the county plan in various ways. The county plan may discuss city policies in the broad context of countywide policy. It may summarize city policies while laying out the county policies for the surrounding unincorporated area. It may examine city policies in the context of community plans that it has adopted for the surrounding unincorporated areas.

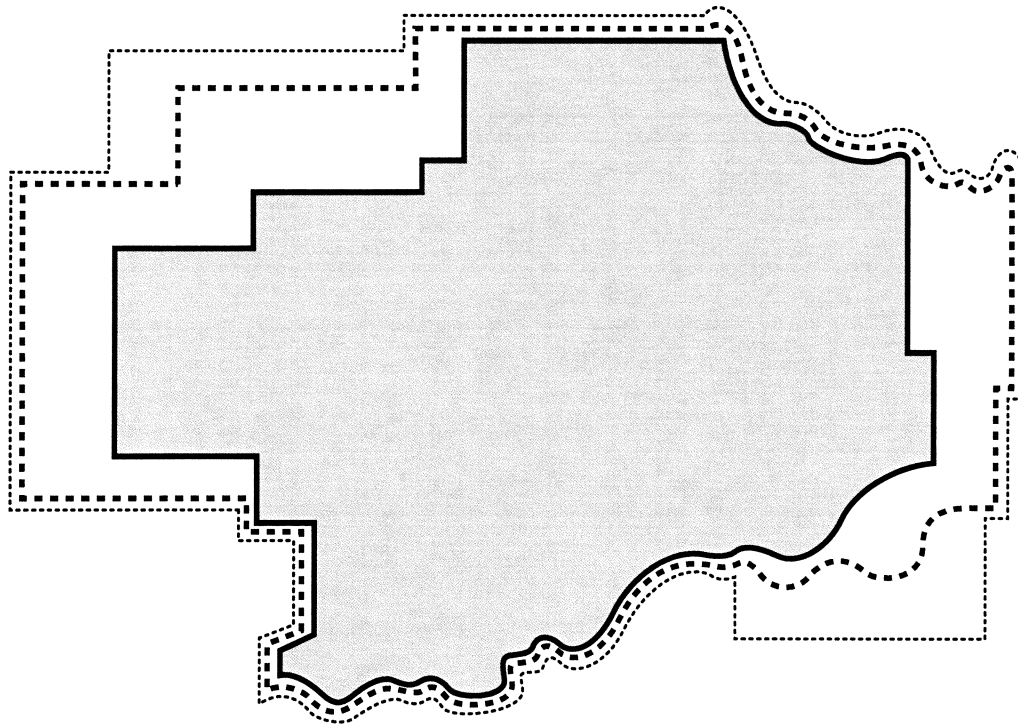
In addition, since issues are not confined to political boundaries, the law provides for planning outside of the jurisdiction’s territory. Cooperative extraterritorial planning can be used to guide the orderly and efficient extension of services and utilities; ensure the preservation of open space, agricultural, and resource conservation lands; and establish consistent standards for development in the plans of adjoining jurisdictions.

Cities and counties should work together to delineate planning areas and may establish formal agreements for processing development proposals. For example, Yolo County delegates a portion of its land use authority to the City of Davis within areas surrounding the city. As urbanization occurs and adjoining cities expand, the potential for conflict between cities competing for the same lands increases. Intercity cooperation in establishing planning areas can proactively help to avoid such disputes.

Regionalism

Viewing the local general plan in its regional con-

Theoretical Relationship Between a City's Planning Area and Sphere of Influence



Current City Limits:

Encompasses incorporated territory where land use is controlled by the city.



City's Sphere of Influence:

Adopted by the LAFCO, encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory that is the city's ultimate service area.



City's Planning Area Boundary:

Encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory bearing a relation to the city's planning. The planning area may extend beyond the sphere of influence.

text is important. Traditionally, the concept of “community” encompassed only a local entity—the city or county. With increasing urbanization, the growing interdependence of local governments, and important issues that transcend local boundaries, such as transportation, air quality, and floodplain management, the regional perspective should be considered. Cities and counties should identify risks from natural hazards that extend across jurisdictional boundaries, then use any available data from watershed-based floodplain

management, mapped earthquake faults, or high fire-hazard areas as planning tools to address any significant issues. Each local planning agency carries a responsibility to coordinate its general plan with regional planning efforts as much as possible.

Regional planning efforts typically address single issues or have indirect links to the local planning process. Plans prepared by councils of government and other designated regional agencies provide the basis for allocating federal and state funds used for specific items,

such as transportation facilities. Other regional plans, such as those for air or water quality, spell out measures that local governments must institute in order to meet federal or state standards for the region. Still others, such as regional housing allocation plans, measure each local government's responsibility for satisfying a specific share of regional needs. Some regional agencies have put together useful information on seismic safety and other issues that can be helpful in the planning process.

The Legislature has mandated consideration of certain regional impacts in the general plan. For example, if a city or county adopts or amends a mandatory general plan element limiting the number of residential units that may be constructed on an annual basis, it must explain that action. The city or county must make specific findings concerning the efforts it has made to implement its housing element and the public health, safety, and welfare considerations that justify reducing housing opportunities in the region (§65302.8). Further, cities and counties must balance the housing needs of the region against the needs of their residents for public services and the available fiscal and environmental resources (§65863.6, §66412.3). In addition, the housing element of the general plan must include action programs to accommodate the locality's regional fair share of housing (§65583, §65584).

Local general plans should recognize the city's or county's regional role if regional needs are to be satisfied, federal and state standards met, and coordination achieved in the location of public facilities. Accordingly, general plans should include a discussion of the extent to which the general plan's policies, standards, and proposals correspond to regional plans and the plans of adjoining communities. A city or county may need to reexamine its own general plan when its neighbors make important changes to their plans.

Issue Comprehensiveness

A general plan must address a broad range of issues. Under the "shoe fits" doctrine discussed in Chapter 4, the plan should focus on those issues that are relevant to the planning area (§65301(c)). The plan must address the jurisdiction's physical development, such as general locations, appropriate mix, timing, and extent of land uses and supporting infrastructure. The broad scope of physical development issues may range from appropriate areas for building factories to open space for preserving endangered species (see Chapter 4 for examples). This may include not only those issues described in the planning statutes, but regional issues as well.

In the 1960s, planners began to assert that land use decisions have not only immediate and future physical and environmental impacts, but also social and economic impacts. Because a general plan represents the most comprehensive local expression of the general welfare as it relates to land use regulation, recognizing social and economic concerns in the general plan may be quite appropriate. Social and economic issues may be discussed within the context of the mandatory elements, such as housing and land use. Some jurisdictions have adopted an optional economic development element as part of their general plans (see Chapter 6). Environmental justice, which recognizes that land use decisions have consequences for social equity, may also be addressed within the context of the mandatory elements. This is discussed in Chapter 2.

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

The concept of internal consistency holds that no policy conflicts can exist, either textual or diagrammatic, between the components of an otherwise complete and adequate general plan. Different policies must be balanced and reconciled within the plan. The internal consistency requirement has five dimensions, described below.

"In construing the provisions of this article, the Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency." (§65300.5)

Equal Status Among Elements

All elements of the general plan have equal legal status. For example, the land use element policies are not superior to the policies of the open-space element.

A case in point: in *Sierra Club v. Board of Supervisors of Kern County* (1981) 126 Cal.App.3d 698, two of Kern County's general plan elements, land use and open space, designated conflicting land uses for the same property. A provision in the general plan text reconciled this and other map inconsistencies by stating that "if in any instance there is a conflict between the land use element and the open-space element, the land use element controls." The court of appeal struck down this clause because it violated the internal consistency requirement under §65300.5. No element is legally subordinate to another; the gen-

eral plan must resolve potential conflicts among the elements through clear language and policy consistency.

Consistency Between Elements

All elements of a general plan, whether mandatory or optional, must be consistent with one another. The court decision in *Concerned Citizens of Calaveras County v. Board of Supervisors* (1985) 166 Cal.App.3d 90 illustrates this point. In that case, the county land use element contained proposals expected to result in increased population. The circulation element, however, failed to provide feasible remedies for the predicted traffic congestion that would follow. The county simply stated that it would lobby for funds to solve the future traffic problems. The court held that this vague response was insufficient to reconcile the conflicts.

Also, housing element law requires local agencies to adopt housing element programs that achieve the goals and implement the policies of the housing element. Such programs must identify the means by which consistency will be achieved with other general plan elements (§65583(c)).

A city or county may incorporate by reference into its general plan all or a portion of another jurisdiction's plan. When doing so, the city or county should make sure that any materials incorporated by reference are consistent with the rest of its general plan.

Consistency Within Elements

Each element's data, analyses, goals, policies, and implementation programs must be consistent with and complement one another. Established goals, data, and analysis form the foundation for any ensuing policies. For example, if one portion of a circulation element indicates that county roads are sufficient to accommodate the projected level of traffic while another section of the same element describes a worsening traffic situation aggravated by continued subdivision activity, the element is not internally consistent (*Concerned Citizens of Calaveras County v. Board of Supervisors* (1985) 166 Cal.App.3d 90).

Area Plan Consistency

All principles, goals, objectives, policies, and plan proposals set forth in an area or community plan must be consistent with the overall general plan.

The general plan should explicitly discuss the role of area plans if they are to be used. Similarly, each area plan should discuss its specific relationship to the general plan. In 1986, the Court of Appeal ruled on an area plan that was alleged to be inconsistent with the larger

general plan. The court upheld both the area plan and the general plan when it found that the general plan's "nonurban/rural" designation, by the plan's own description, was not intended to be interpreted literally or precisely, especially with regard to small areas. The court noted that the area plan's more specific "urban residential" designation was pertinent and that there was no inconsistency between the countywide general plan and the area plan (*Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc. v. County of Los Angeles* (1986) 177 Cal.App.3d 300). However, the court also noted that in this particular case the geographic area of alleged inconsistency was quite small.

Text and Diagram Consistency

The general plan's text and its accompanying diagrams are integral parts of the plan. They must be in agreement. For example, if a general plan's land use element diagram designates low-density residential development in an area where the text describes the presence of prime agricultural land and further contains written policies to preserve agricultural land or open space, a conflict exists. The plan's text and diagrams must be reconciled, because "internal consistency requires that general plan diagrams of land use, circulation systems, open-space and natural resources areas reflect written policies and programs in the text for each element." (*Curtin's California Land-Use and Planning Law*, 1998 edition, p. 18)

Without consistency in all five of these areas, the general plan cannot effectively serve as a clear guide to future development. Decision-makers will face conflicting directives; citizens will be confused about the policies and standards the community has selected; findings of consistency of subordinate land use decisions such as rezonings and subdivisions will be difficult to make; and land owners, business, and industry will be unable to rely on the general plan's stated priorities and standards for their own individual decision-making. Beyond this, inconsistencies in the general plan can expose the jurisdiction to expensive and lengthy litigation.

LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

Since the general plan affects the welfare of current and future generations, state law requires that the plan take a long-term perspective (§65300). The general plan projects conditions and needs into the future as a basis for determining objectives. It also establishes long-term policy for day-to-day decision-making based upon those objectives.

The time frames for effective planning vary among issues. The housing element, for example, specifically

involves time increments of five years. Geologic hazards, on the other hand, persist for hundreds or thousands of years. Sewer, water, and road systems are generally designed with a 30- to 50-year lifespan. Capital improvement planning is typically based upon a five- or seven-year term. Economic trends may change rapidly in response to outside forces.

Differences in time frame also affect the formulation of general plan goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures. Goals and objectives are longer term, slowly evolving to suit changing community values or to reflect the success of action programs. Specific policies tend to be shorter term, shifting with the political climate or self-imposed time limits. Implementation programs tend to have the shortest span because they must quickly respond to the demands of new funding sources, the results of their own activities, and the jurisdiction's immediate needs and problems.

Most jurisdictions select 15 to 20 years as the long-term horizon for the general plan. The horizon does not mark an end point, but rather provides a general context in which to make shorter-term decisions. The local jurisdiction may choose a time horizon that serves its particular needs. Remember that planning is a continuous process; the general plan should be reviewed regularly, regardless of its horizon, and revised as new information becomes available and as community needs and values change. For instance, new population projections that indicate that housing will be needed at a greater clip than anticipated, an unexpected major development in a neighboring jurisdiction that greatly increases traffic congestion, or a ballot initiative that establishes an urban growth boundary may all trigger the need to revise the general plan. A general plan based upon outdated information and projections is not a sound basis for day-to-day decision-making and may be legally inadequate. As such, it will be susceptible to successful legal challenge.

DEFINING THE PARTS OF A GENERAL PLAN

A general plan is made up of text describing goals and objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals, as well as a set of maps and diagrams. Together, these constituent parts paint a picture of the community's future development. The following discussions help to clarify the meanings of these and other important terms.

Development Policy

A development policy is a general plan statement that guides action. In a broad sense, development poli-

cies include goals and objectives, principles, policies, standards, and plan proposals.

Diagram

A diagram is a graphic expression of a general plan's development policies, particularly its plan proposals. Many types of development policies lend themselves well to graphic treatment, such as the distribution of land uses, urban design, infrastructure, and geologic and other natural hazards.

A diagram must be consistent with the general plan text (§65300.5) and should have the same long-term planning perspective as the rest of the general plan. The Attorney General has observed that "...when the Legislature has used the term 'map,' it has required preciseness, exact location, and detailed boundaries...." as in the case of the Subdivision Map Act. No such precision is required of a general plan diagram (67 Cal.Ops.Atty.Gen. 75,77).

As a general rule, a diagram or diagrams, along with the general plan's text, should be detailed enough so that the

users of the plan, whether staff, elected and appointed officials, or the public, can reach the same general conclusion on the appropriate use of any parcel of land at a particular phase of a city's or county's physical development. Decision-makers should also be able to use a general plan, including its diagram or diagrams, in coordinating day-to-day land use and infrastructure decisions with the city's or county's future physical development scheme.

At the same time, given the long-term nature of a general plan, its diagram or diagrams and text should be general enough to allow a degree of flexibility in decision-making as times change. For example, a general plan may recognize the need for and desirability of a community park in a proposed residential area, but the precise location of the park may not be known when the plan is adopted. The plan would not need to pinpoint the location, but it should have a generalized diagram along with policies saying that the park site will be selected and appropriate zoning applied at the time the area is subdivided. In this sense, while zoning must be consistent with the general plan, the plan's diagram or diagrams and the zoning map are not required to be identical.

Goal

A goal is a general direction-setter. It is an ideal future end related to the public health, safety, or general welfare.

"The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals." (§65302)

A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, may be abstract in nature. Consequently, a goal is generally not quantifiable or time-dependent.

Although goals are not mentioned in the description of general plan contents in §65302, they are included here for several reasons. First, defining goals is often the initial step of a comprehensive planning process, with more specific objectives defined later, as discussed in Chapter 3. Second, goals are specifically mentioned in the statutes governing housing element contents (§65583). Third, while the terms “goal” and “objective” are used interchangeably in some general plans, many plans differentiate between broad, unquantifiable goals and specific objectives. Either approach is allowable, as flexibility is a characteristic of the general plan.

Examples of goals:

- ◆ Quiet residential streets
- ◆ A diversified economic base for the city
- ◆ An aesthetically pleasing community
- ◆ A safe community

Goals should be expressed as ends, not actions. For instance, the first example above expresses an end, namely, “quiet residential streets.” It does not say, “Establish quiet residential streets” or “To establish quiet residential streets.”

Objective

An objective is a specified end, condition, or state that is an intermediate step toward attaining a goal. It should be achievable and, when possible, measurable and time-specific. An objective may pertain to one particular aspect of a goal or it may be one of several successive steps toward goal achievement. Consequently, there may be more than one objective for each goal.

Examples of objectives:

- ◆ The addition of 100 affordable housing units over the next five years.
- ◆ A 25 percent increase in downtown office space by 2008.
- ◆ A 50 percent reduction in the rate of farmland conversion over the next ten years.
- ◆ A reduction in stormwater runoff from streets and parking lots.

Principle

A principle is an assumption, fundamental rule, or

doctrine guiding general plan policies, proposals, standards, and implementation measures. Principles are based on community values, generally accepted planning doctrine, current technology, and the general plan’s objectives. In practice, principles underlie the process of developing the plan but seldom need to be explicitly stated in the plan itself.

Examples of principles:

- ◆ Mixed use encourages urban vitality.
- ◆ The residential neighborhoods within a city should be within a convenient and safe walking distance of an elementary school.
- ◆ Parks provide recreational and aesthetic benefits.
- ◆ Risks from natural hazards should be identified and avoided to the extent practicable.

Policy

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a commitment of the local legislative body to a particular course of action. A policy is based on and helps implement a general plan’s objectives.

A policy is carried out by implementation measures. For a policy to be useful as a guide to action it must be clear and unambiguous. Adopting broadly drawn and vague policies is poor practice. Clear policies are particularly important when it comes to judging whether or not zoning decisions, subdivisions, public works projects, etc., are consistent with the general plan.

When writing policies, be aware of the difference between “shall” and “should.” “Shall” indicates an unequivocal directive. “Should” signifies a less rigid directive, to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations. Use of the word “should” to give the impression of more commitment than actually intended is a common but unacceptable practice. It is better to adopt no policy than to adopt a policy with no backbone.

Solid policy is based on solid information. The analysis of data collected during the planning process provides local officials with the knowledge about trends, existing conditions, and projections that they need to formulate policy. If projected community conditions are not in line with a general plan’s objectives, local legislative bodies may adopt policies that will help bring about a more desirable future.

Examples of policies:

- ◆ The city shall not approve a parking ordinance vari-

ance unless the variance pertains to the rebuilding of an unintentionally destroyed non-conforming use.

- ◆ The city shall not approve plans for the downtown shopping center until an independently conducted market study indicates that the center would be economically feasible.
- ◆ The city shall give favorable consideration to conditional use permit proposals involving adaptive reuse of buildings that are designated as “architecturally significant” by the cultural resources element.

Standards

A standard is a rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. Standards define the abstract terms of objectives and policies with concrete specifications.

The Government Code makes various references to general plan standards. For example, §65302(a) states in part that the land use element must “...include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan.” Other examples of statutory references to general plan standards include those found in §66477 (the Quimby Act) and §66479 (reservations of land within subdivisions). Of course, a local legislature may adopt any other general plan standards it deems desirable.

Examples of standards:

- ◆ A minimally acceptable peak hour level of service for an arterial street is level of service C.
- ◆ The minimum acreage required for a regional shopping center is from 40 to 50 acres.
- ◆ High-density residential means 15 to 30 dwelling units per acre and up to 42 dwelling units per acre with a density bonus.
- ◆ The first floor of all new construction shall be at least two feet above the base flood elevation.

Plan Proposal

A plan proposal describes the development intended to take place in an area. Plan proposals are often expressed on the general plan diagram.

Examples of plan proposals:

- ◆ First Street and Harbor Avenue are designated as arterials.
- ◆ The proposed downtown shopping center will be

located within the area bound by D and G Avenues and Third and Fourth Streets.

- ◆ A new parking structure shall be located in the vicinities of each of the following downtown intersections: First Street and A Avenue, and Fifth Street and D Avenue.

Implementation Measure

An implementation measure is an action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy. Each policy must have at least one corresponding implementation measure.

Examples of implementation measures:

- ◆ The city shall use tax-increment financing to pay the costs of replacing old sidewalks in the redevelopment area.
- ◆ The city shall adopt a specific plan for the industrial park.
- ◆ Areas designated by the land use element for agriculture shall be placed in the agricultural zone.

Linking Objectives to Implementation

The following examples show the relationships among objectives, policies, and implementation measures. The examples are arranged according to a hierarchy from the general to the specific—from goals to implementation measures. In an actual general plan, there might be more than one policy under each objective, more than one implementation measure under each policy, etc.

Goal:

- ◆ A thriving downtown that is the center of the city’s retail and service commercial activities.

Objective:

- ◆ Development of a new regional shopping center in the downtown.

Policy:

- ◆ The city shall not approve discretionary projects or building permits that could impede development of the downtown regional shopping center.

Implementation measures:

- ◆ The city shall adopt an interim zoning ordinance restricting further development in the general vicinity of the proposed downtown shopping center

until a study has been completed determining its exact configuration.

- ◆ During the interim zoning period, the city shall adopt a special regional shopping center zoning classification that permits the development of the proposed downtown mall.
- ◆ Upon completion of the study, the city council shall select a site for the downtown mall and shall apply the shopping center zone to the property.

Goal:

- ◆ Affordable, decent, and sanitary housing for all members of the community.

Objective:

- ◆ 500 additional dwelling units for low-income households by 2010.

Policy:

- ◆ When a developer of housing within the high-density residential designation agrees to construct at least 30 percent of the total units of a housing development for low-income households, the city shall grant a 40 percent density bonus for the housing project.

Implementation measure:

- ◆ The city shall amend its zoning ordinance to allow for a 40 percent density bonus in the high-density residential zone.

COMMUNITY PLANS, AREA PLANS, AND SPECIFIC PLANS

Area and community plans are part of the general plan. A specific plan, on the other hand, is a tool for implementing the general plan but is not part of the general plan. The following paragraphs look briefly at each of these types of plans.

“Area plan” and “community plan” are terms for plans that focus on a particular region or community within the overall general plan area. An area or community plan is adopted by resolution as an amendment to the general plan, in the manner set out in §65350, et seq. It refines the policies of the general plan as they apply to a smaller geographic area and is implemented by ordinances and other discretionary actions, such as zoning. The area or community plan process also provides a forum for resolving local conflicts. These plans are commonly used in large cities and counties where there are a variety of distinct communities or regions.

As discussed earlier, an area or community plan must be internally consistent with the general plan of which it is a part. To facilitate such consistency, the general plan should provide a policy framework for the detailed treatment of specific issues in the various area or community plans. Ideally, to simplify implementation, the area or community plans and the general plan should share a uniform format for land use categories, terminology, and diagrams.

Each area or community plan need not address all of the issues required by §65302 when the overall general plan satisfies these requirements. For example, an area or community plan need not discuss fire safety if the jurisdiction-wide plan adequately addresses the subject and the area or community plan is consistent with those policies and standards. Keep in mind that while an area or community plan may provide greater detail to policies affecting development in a defined area, adopting one or a series of such plans does not substitute for regular updates to the general plan. Many of the mandatory general plan issues are most effectively addressed on a jurisdiction-wide basis that ties together the policies of the individual area or community plans.

A specific plan is a hybrid that can combine policy statements with development regulations (§65450, et seq.). It is often used to address the development requirements for a single project such as urban infill or a planned community. As a result, its emphasis is on concrete standards and development criteria. Its text and diagrams will address the planning of necessary infrastructure and facilities, as well as land uses and open space. In addition, it will specify those programs and regulations necessary to finance infrastructure and public works projects. A specific plan may be adopted either by resolution, like a general plan, or by ordinance, like zoning.

Specific plans must be consistent with all facets of the general plan, including the policy statements. In turn, zoning, subdivisions, and public works projects must be consistent with the specific plan (§65455). See Chapter 9 for more about specific plans. The publication *A Planner's Guide to Specific Plans*, by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), is another good source of information.

ELEMENTS, ISSUES, AND FLEXIBILITY

In statute, the general plan is presented as a collection of seven “elements,” or subject categories (see §65302). These elements and the issues embodied by each are briefly summarized below. They are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The land use element designates the type, intensity, and general distribution of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses.

The circulation element is correlated with the land use element and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.

The housing element is a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community. In addition, it embodies policies for providing adequate housing and includes action programs for that purpose. By statute, the housing element must be updated every five years.

The conservation element addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

The open-space element details plans and measures for the long-range preservation and conservation of open-space lands, including open space for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources (including agricultural lands), outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.

The noise element identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for land use distribution.

The safety element establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.

The level of discussion given to each issue in the general plan depends upon local conditions and the relative local importance of that issue. When a city or county determines that an issue specified in the law is not locally relevant, the general plan may briefly discuss the reason for that decision but does not otherwise have to address that issue (§65301).

A local general plan may also include other topics of local interest. For instance, a city or county may choose to incorporate into its land use element a detailed program for financing infrastructure and timing capital improvements. The safety element of a city or county that suffers from wildfire hazards may contain strategic fire protection planning policies to mitigate such hazards.

In the statutory descriptions of the elements, a number of issues appear in more than one element. In order to minimize redundancies or internal conflicts in the general plan, combining elements or organizing the plan by issue often makes practical sense. This idea is explored further in Chapter 5.

There are a number of state and federal laws, such as the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act, the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, the Endangered Species Act, and others, that can affect the content of the general plan. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

In addition to the mandatory elements, a city or county may adopt any other elements that relate to its physical development (§65303). Once adopted, these optional elements become an integral part of the general plan with the same force and effect as the mandatory elements. Accordingly, zoning, subdivisions, public works, specific plans, and other actions that must be consistent with the general plan must be consistent with any optional elements.

Common themes for optional elements include air quality, capital improvements, community design, economic development, energy, parks and recreation, and water. Suggestions for preparing a number of optional elements are provided in Chapter 6.

An optional element may clarify how a local government exercises its police powers, and in some instances, can expand a local government's authority. For example, the California Energy Commission may delegate geothermal power plant licensing authority to counties with certified geothermal elements (see Chapter 6 for guidelines). In the more typical situation, an optional element will indicate how a local government will apply its existing police power or other authority. For example, a historic preservation element may lay the foundation for historic district regulations or participation in the California Main Street Program. A strategic fire prevention planning element could identify wildfire hazard areas, control new development within those areas, and provide the basis for zoning, subdivision, and brush clearance ordinances intended to minimize fire hazards.

ADOPTION OF ANOTHER JURISDICTION'S GENERAL PLAN AND JOINT ADOPTION

A city or county may adopt all or a portion of the general plan of another public agency (§65301(a)). Additionally, §65302(g) specifically provides that a city may adopt the county's safety element if the county's element "is sufficiently detailed containing appropriate policies and programs for adoption by a city." One of the benefits of this approach is that it eliminates duplication of effort in collecting data for the more technical elements.

A city and county may jointly prepare and separately adopt a general plan or individual elements. A city or county may adopt a functional plan such as a regional transportation plan prepared by a special district, regional planning agency, or some other public agency.

Although joint adoption of another jurisdiction's

CHAPTER 6

Optional Elements

All statutory references are to the California Government Code unless otherwise noted.

State law offers considerable flexibility to go beyond the mandatory elements of the general plan. Section 65303 enables a county or city to adopt “any other elements or address any other subjects, which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.” Once adopted, an optional element carries the same legal weight as any of the seven mandatory elements and must be consistent with all other elements, as required by §65300.5.

Localities have adopted all kinds of optional elements on topics ranging from aesthetics to water resources. The flexibility of content and format offered by the Government Code allows cities and counties to fashion elements that uniquely address subjects of particular concern to them. This chapter offers some advice on several of the most common and useful optional elements: air quality, capital improvements/public facilities, community design, economic/fiscal development, energy, floodplain management, geothermal, parks and recreation, and water. Of course, these are only suggestions; the actual scope and level of detail contained in an optional element is left to the city or county to decide.

AIR QUALITY

Chronic exposure to air pollutants is a serious health risk to millions of California residents, particularly the young, the elderly, and people with heart disease and respiratory problems. Safeguarding public health has been the primary focus of federal and state air quality legislation and activities for many years. Air pollution also impacts local economies by damaging agricultural crops, natural vegetation, buildings, and other exposed materials. In addition, the economic health of an area can be affected adversely if insufficient air quality improvement triggers more stringent federally mandated air pollution controls on business. Air pollution also can impair visibility and obscure views. For these reasons, cities and counties should strive to reduce emissions for the benefit of both their own residents and those of other communities in their region and the state as a whole.

Local jurisdictions have responsibility for land use planning and can also significantly affect the design,

creation, and management of development and the local circulation system. Local governments have an opportunity to address air quality issues through general plans, development ordinances, local circulation systems, transportation services, and other plans and programs. No other level of government has such responsibility, including air districts.

The general plan, as the foundation for all local planning and development, can be an important tool for implementing policies and programs beneficial to air quality. Communities may choose to adopt a separate air quality element or to integrate air quality-beneficial objectives, policies, and strategies in other elements of the plan, such as the land use, circulation, conservation, and community design elements. Currently, approximately 100 cities and counties in California have adopted air quality elements. Whichever method is selected, consistency among elements and policies within the plan is essential for successful implementation. In addition, cooperation between localities is important since air pollution does not stop at political boundaries.

Relevant Issues

Motor vehicles are a major source of carbon monoxide, fine particulates, and pollutants that combine to form ground-level ozone in the state’s metropolitan areas. The dispersed growth patterns prevalent in many metropolitan areas of California have re-

Key to Abbreviations in Chapter 6

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter to denote other elements that might also address a particular issue:

L: Land Use
CI: Circulation
H: Housing
CO: Conservation
O: Open Space
N: Noise
S: Safety

MAP or **DIA** indicates information that can be shown on a map or diagram.

ing of existing and projected public facilities, including buildings and infrastructure.

- ◆ Promote joint use projects where appropriate.
- ◆ Specify the relationship between the element, the city's or county's local capital improvements program, if any, and the capital budget.
- ◆ Establish linkages with economic development programs and redevelopment agency activities, if any.
- ◆ Identify a menu of preferred financing methods for infrastructure (e.g., general fund, special tax measure, general obligation bond measure, benefit assessment, tax increment financing, impact fees, etc.), if any.
- ◆ Identify the type of capital improvements to be obtained through development exactions, the relative public/private cost share, and the basis for such exactions (this is expected to be a general guide for exactions, not the sole basis for such exactions).
- ◆ Establish standards for addressing capital improvements/capital facilities in specific plans and community plans.
- ◆ Adopt an energy resources plan, including conservation measures, alternative energy sources, and cost-effective supplies.
- ◆ Establish design standards for public facilities and grounds.

For useful references, see the Bibliography under "Funding and Financial Impact," "Infrastructure Planning," and "Urban Design."

COMMUNITY DESIGN

A community design element may provide additional direction, beyond that of the land use element, to the planning area's development pattern, form, structure, and sense of place. A community design element may provide the basis for aesthetic regulation of public and private land and structures, which is a valid exercise of the police power (see *Ehrlich v. Culver City*, (1996) 12Cal.4th 854). OPR's 2002 Local Government Survey identified 113 jurisdictions with adopted community design elements.

The policies and programs of a community design element may provide specific guidance to enhance the sense of place and quality of life in the planning area. It should bring together the principles of the other elements into an overall set of qualita-

tive policies. It may be used to establish principles to guide the form and appearance of neighborhoods, streets, parks, public facilities, new development, and redevelopment.

Relevant Issues

The issues covered by the community design element should be relevant to the physical development of the planning area. The subjects analyzed should reflect those that are important to both public and private interests. The issues should reflect the changing community and the factors that form its existing identity. The following is a list of basic issues that should be covered.

- ◆ **Community Form:** Elements that define the character of the community (e.g., viewsheds, parks, open space, airport, freeways, ridgelines, rivers, etc.).
- ◆ **Neighborhood Structure:** Favorable features that characterize the neighborhoods in the planning area. Street types, parks, landscaping, lot sizes, boundary elements, and architectural types all contribute to the sense of place.
- ◆ **Community Conservation:** Patterns of open space, circulation, and landmarks provide identity to the planning area and neighborhoods, making them more livable. The positive attributes of existing neighborhoods should be preserved and utilized in planning for revitalization with common or related themes.
- ◆ **Commercial/Industrial Connections:** Office buildings and office and industrial parks may include patterns and features that enhance or detract from the existing

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS IN ACTION

One example of the development and implementation of a community design element is the City of Dana Point's urban design element in its 1991 general plan. The intent of the element is to "...provide proposals and policies to improve the image, character, and quality of life of the city." The element includes urban design issues, goals, and policies for its viewsheds, civic center, beaches, and other related public and private spaces.

The element is implemented through design guidelines that contain specific standards for public and private projects subject to discretionary design review. These guidelines are intended to "promote higher quality design that is sensitive to Dana Point's natural setting, surrounding environment, and community design goals."

community or the general plan vision of the future. Specific design policies should be developed with the input of both the public and business interests.

Ideas For Data And Analysis

The following list of ideas for data and analysis expands upon the relevant issues to provide some broad topics for consideration. Topics may be added or removed depending upon relevance and consistency with the issues pertinent to the planning area.

- ◆ **Transition Areas:** Identify areas in transition. These may include commercial or industrial areas where use is declining or that have been abandoned. Consider implementing zoning and land use designations to allow for adaptive reuse. Analyze the possible causes for the loss of vitality.
- ◆ **Commercial and Industrial Sites:** Analyze criteria for measuring compatibility between proposed development and existing land uses. Formulate flexible development standards that promote solutions to common problems (e.g., unused parking, parking as dominant feature, noise, incompatible uses, etc.).
- ◆ **New Residential Development:** Develop concepts for residential design and identify features of the undeveloped land that will provide continuity with and connections to existing neighborhoods and areas of new development.
- ◆ **Landmarks:** Identify public places, buildings, and open spaces (including landmark trees) that distinguish the planning area and give it a sense of place. Encourage the placement of art within areas used for public gatherings. Consider the use of area history and cultural background as defining factors for public art and displays.
- ◆ **Spatial Definition:** Identify community features that define space (e.g., building mass, landscaping, streets, walls, etc.). Identify community spaces that are attractive (e.g., shopping districts, parks, landscaping, etc.). Analyze how good features may be duplicated through design requirements.
- ◆ **Continuity and Connection:** Identify existing features (e.g., creeks, trails, bike paths, streets, etc.) that provide continuity and connection throughout the planning area. Identify neighborhood and community attributes that can be strengthened to establish connections to the entire planning area.
- ◆ **Landscaping and Trees:** Analyze street landscaping, trees, and the types of landscaping on private residential and commercial lots for visual relief and shade effectiveness. Landscaping and trees provide energy conservation benefits and add distinctiveness, a sense of quality, spatial definition, and focal breaks to otherwise monotonous streetscapes.
- ◆ **Historic Preservation:** Identify historic and architecturally significant buildings and evaluate their condition. Inventory structures or landmarks that have been or should be designated as historic resources and establish policies for their preservation, protection, and maintenance.
- ◆ **Street Design:** Analyze the relationships between existing streets and the areas and uses they serve. Streets are not important only for transportation; when thoughtfully designed, they establish boundaries, provide focal relief, and contribute to the livability and safety of the community.
- ◆ **Public Art:** Identify existing public art, its location, and the public's reaction to its ability to enhance the community. Classify types of art and the suitable locations for its display. Public art may provide a focal point or social aspect to parks, public facilities, and structures, thereby enhancing the aesthetic environment.
- ◆ **Signage:** Inventory signs that are unique and reflective of the community. Identify sizes, shapes, and designs that are considered to be characteristic of specific areas or commercial districts. For example, commercial strips may be characterized by neon signs whereas the downtown core may be distinguished by natural colors and wooden signs.

Ideas for Development Policies

The following list of broad development policies is intended to provide general guidance in the development of more specific policies oriented to the particular issues facing a local jurisdiction. Many of these policies should be correlated with the land use and circulation elements to ensure that decisions incorporate community design principals.

- ◆ **Encourage the development of pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and communities.**
- ◆ **Define the urban extent of the community.** Identify transitional spaces between the urban limits and the edge of the planning area. (L, O)
- ◆ **Encourage community-based rehabilitation and neighborhood improvements,** particularly in transition areas.
- ◆ **Promote neighborhood cohesiveness through neighborhood-based design guidelines** that are consistent with existing or proposed architectural themes. Consider spatial definition, continuity, and building scale.

- ◆ Pursue loan programs specific to the rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods.
- ◆ Foster new development that is consistent with the type, intensity, character, and scale of the area.
- ◆ Encourage higher-density housing near transit. (L)
- ◆ Adopt historic preservation ordinances to preserve and protect historic and cultural resources.
- ◆ Adopt development guidelines for central commercial and shopping areas that encourage compact (as opposed to strip) form, pedestrian access, and increased pedestrian traffic. (L)
- ◆ Design focal points and architectural features into the development or rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods.
- ◆ Establish siting and design criteria for public buildings and parks to enhance spatial definition, create focal points, and provide landscaping and trees.
- ◆ Design and install entry landscapes at the major entrances to the community and along transportation routes.
- ◆ Encourage cooperative efforts to provide art in public buildings and private businesses permanently or as part of a rotation of works of art.
- ◆ Streamline permit processes for the addition of public art and landmarks to existing locations. Provide incentives for development with provisions for the display of art and favorable structural design.
- ◆ Amend or adopt a sign ordinance that regulates size, type, material, height, location, and lighting consistent with the policies and objectives of the community design element. (L)
- ◆ Finance and construct gateway structures at the major entrances to the community that are reflective of the community.
- ◆ Assist private business in the aesthetic improvement of buildings in the downtown business district.
- ◆ Preserve and protect natural land forms and features, such as rivers, ridgelines, and their viewsheds, that contribute to the identity of the community. (CO, O)
- ◆ Encourage new development projects to incorporate natural amenities (i.e., landmark trees and rock outcroppings) into their design.
- ◆ Require connections between neighborhoods, parks, and open space areas for bicycle and jogging paths. (L, CI)
- ◆ Incorporate flexibility in design and architectural features into development standards.
- ◆ Encourage and assist in the placement of overhead utilities underground.
- ◆ Adopt a cellular tower ordinance that promotes flexibility and creative design for placement on existing public and private buildings and structures (e.g., light poles).

For references on this topic, see the Bibliography under “Transportation and Circulation” and “Urban Design.”

ECONOMIC/FISCAL DEVELOPMENT

The structure of a city’s or county’s economy plays an important role in the physical development of the planning area and the stability of the local tax base. The purpose of adopting an economic/fiscal development element varies by jurisdiction. However, most are based upon a desire to maintain and enhance the economic character of the community while providing for a stable annual budget. An effective element will establish a consistent set of policies that provide general direction to local government on how the community can focus resources to retain local business, attract new industries, support the tax base, and sustain the ability to provide public services for current and future residents.

Economic development elements can function beyond mere statements of policy. An effective element may be used as the basis for a more specific economic development strategy. Consideration should be given during the preparation of the element to the cumulative effectiveness of the integration of policies central to land use, circulation, and public facilities.

Relevant Issues

The contents of an economic/fiscal development element may vary widely between jurisdictions. The element may include any locally or regionally relevant issues and must take into account those issues identified in the other elements. The following is a list of general issues that may be covered:

- ◆ Business Retention and Development by Sector: The needs, limitations, and alternatives to existing businesses and potential improvements and strategies to encourage business retention.
- ◆ Employment Development: Areas of employment growth, shortages, and needs.
- ◆ Business Recruitment: The types, number, and